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C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 000940

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DEPARTMENT FOR SA, SA/INS, IO, IO/T, INL/C/CJ(BROWNE)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06-08-14

TAGS: SNAR AORC PREL CE

SUBJECT: In meeting with Ambassador, Colombo Plan SG requests update on USG position on proposed amendment

Refs: (A) Colombo 668, and previous

(U) Classified by Ambassador Jeffrey J. Lunstead.
Reasons 1.5 (b,d).

¶1. (C) On June 8, Kittipan Kanjanapipatkul, Colombo Plan Secretary General, briefed the Ambassador on the agenda of the upcoming June 14-16 39th Consultative Committee Meeting (CCM) to be held in Tehran, Iran. (There will not be any USG attendance at the meeting in Tehran.) Specifically, the Secretary General anticipated that member countries would raise the issue of the proposed amendment to the Colombo Plan and asked the Ambassador if there was any update on the USG position regarding the proposed amendment. (The proposed amendment aims to restrict access to Colombo Plan training opportunities for countries more than four years in arrears, until a partial payment of back dues is paid.) In reply, the Ambassador said that the U.S. continued to work on the issue, but that we had no further formal response at present. In addition, the Ambassador felt that it would not be acceptable to the U.S. for the USG position to be merely noted during the CCM, with the organization adopting the amendment on the strength of the approval by the remaining 25 countries. The issue would not have consensus, the Ambassador said.

¶2. (C) Providing additional background, the Secretary General said that during the 38th CCM in July 2001, the entire organization, including the U.S., agreed to the proposed amendment but felt that the manner of sanction was too harsh. The July 2001 version of the proposed amendment required full payment of arrears and the CCM requested the Council to develop a more lenient option. The result was the current version of the proposed amendment which requires only partial payment of arrears. The Secretary General confirmed that there had been U.S. representation at the July 2001 meeting in which the proposed amendment was initially approved.

¶3. (C) In a related development, the Secretary General also noted that Bangladesh had informed the Colombo Plan Secretariat that in the absence of a regulation

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requiring payment of dues, the government would no longer pay the annual dues of 14,500 USD. Bangladesh plans, however, to continue to avail itself of training opportunities and partake in Colombo Plan programs.

¶4. (C) COMMENT: The Secretary General's comments serve to illustrate the demonstrated need the Colombo Plan has to require member countries to pay dues. Further, it highlights the limited effect that restrictions on voting rights will have: given the consensus required for voting in the Council, denial of such rights will not compel the government of Bangladesh to pay its dues. The Colombo Plan is widely recognized for its effective efforts in narcotics demand reduction in Asia and the Pacific and the U.S. is keen for the organization to continue this work (for example, funded by INL, the Colombo Plan is organizing a regional anti-narcotics officer training in Maldives later this month). As the annual dues go solely to support the Secretariat in its administration of the entire organization, it is imperative that the Colombo Plan has an effective, enforceable method of collecting these dues. The many years of work on this proposed amendment show the organization's commitment to being even-handed in its approach. Mission strongly believes the U.S. should support the organization in this endeavor. END COMMENT.

¶5. (U) Minimize considered.

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